

Testimony in support of:

House Bill 5139: An Act Concerning Extended Producer Responsibility for Tires

Submitted by:

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Board Member of the Connecticut Coalition of Recyclers

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Dear Co-Chairs Cohen & Gresco and Members of the Environment Committee:

I am writing as an individual, a retired chemist and as a Board member of the Connecticut Coalition of Recyclers to add my wholehearted support to HB-5139.

I have walked the trails at Hammonasset Beach State Park for over 10 years. Recently, I have discovered a pollution site at a beach due east of Hammonasset Point. I have alerted State Park officials and they are investigating. At this specific site, hundreds of shredded rubber pieces wash up on the shore daily. Upon close examination, one can only conclude that they are coming from discarded old tires from a site just offshore.

As stated by the Product Stewardship Institute – U.S. residents scrap 255 million tires each year. Only about 40% of them are recycled. An additional 60 million old tires lie in stockpiles and others are illegally dumped, where they endanger public health, pollute our waterways, and impose a costly burden on local governments to clean up. Irresponsibly discarded tires hold stagnant water, the perfect breeding grounds for mosquitoes that spread illnesses to humans. They can even catch fire, polluting the air with toxic plumes of black smoke. Some U.S. tire companies have pursued voluntary tire recycling initiatives. But these voluntary industry efforts are few, and too small to address the full scale of the problem.

The rubber pollution we are witnessing daily at Hammonasset is a graphic example of what could happen elsewhere if the disposal of used tires is not managed properly. Vehicle tires consists of a number of chemicals harmful to aquatic life, specifically Zinc Oxide and the antiozonant 6ppd: N-(1,3-Dimethylbutyl)-N'-phenyl-p-phenylenediamine. These chemicals could pose a toxic threat to coastal industries such as fishing, oyster and other shellfish farming.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Bill 5139 and for your help in keeping our residents and shoreline safe. Please pass this bill so we can begin the task of avoiding a future environmental disaster.

